

outsized role in determining which cases will be brought and what position the United States will take in cases decided by the Supreme Court.

An alarming case in point is the Executive Order issued by the president banning Muslims from predominately Muslim countries from entering the United States, which has been denounced by leading national security and foreign policy experts, deemed unconstitutional by scores of law professors and other scholars, sparked peaceful mass demonstrations across the nation, and is opposed by a majority of the American public. The president's ban on Muslims entering the United States was deemed such a clear and egregious violation of the Constitution that then Acting Attorney General Sally Yates announced that she could not, consistent with her oath, defend the order in court.

Sen. Sessions, however, appears not be troubled in the slightest by the cavalier rejection of the principle of religious liberty implicit in the executive order. This is hardly surprising since Sen. Sessions was one of the earliest, most influential, and enthusiastic backers of the Trump presidential campaign and its unconscionable and unconstitutional immigration policies, including the "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" announced by candidate Trump in December 2015. As Sen. Sessions told ABC News in May 2016: "I don't think Trump has gone too far. . . . we should have a temporary ban on entry of people into the country from the Muslim world, but that's because we have an ineffective screening process . . . so I think we're moving in the right direction."

As noted by the more than 1,000 State Department employees who have registered their dissent to the executive order, because there has been a virtual absence of terror attacks committed in recent years by Syrian, Iraqi, Irani, Libyan, Somalia, Sudanese, and Yemeni nationals living in the United States, the president's Muslim ban will have little practical effect in improving public safety.

What it will do, however, is despoil our relations with these countries, and much of the Muslim world, which sees the ban, rightly, as religiously-motivated. So instead of strengthening relations with countries that should be our allies and partners in the fight against terrorism, we alienate them, inflame sentiment against the United States among their citizens, and deprive ourselves of vital intelligence and resources needed to fight the root causes of terror.

Adoption of this wrong-headed policy appears to mean to Sen. Sessions that "we're moving in the right direction." That any member of the President's Cabinet could hold these views is very troubling. That such views are held by the person who could be the Attorney General is frightening and disqualifying.

After all, the U.S. Attorney General and Justice Department is not only the instrument of justice but also the living symbol of the Constitution's promise of equal justice under law. The nation's greatest Attorney Generals conveyed this commitment to equal justice by their prior experience, their words and deeds, and their character.

Think Herbert Brownell, Attorney General for Republican President Eisenhower, who oversaw the integration of Little Rock's Central High School. Think Robert Jackson, Attorney General for Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt, who led the prosecution team at the Nazi War Crimes trial in Nuremberg, Germany. Think Robert F. Kennedy, for whom the Main Justice Building is named, bringing to bear the instruments of federal power to protect Mississippi Freedom Riders and to stare down Gov. George Wal-

lace in the successful effort to integrate the University of Alabama. Think Elliot Richardson, Attorney General under Republican President Richard Nixon, who stood for fidelity to the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law in the infamous 'Saturday Night Massacre' during the Watergate scandal.

Those who argue the Sessions' nomination is no different than those of Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch are simply wrong. The difference is stark—Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch came to the office of Attorney General as career professionals with no history or record of partisan political advocacy. Unlike Sen. Sessions, neither of them ever served in a legislative body or voted to pass or defeat the legislation the Department of Justice is charged with administering.

Nothing in Sen. Sessions' 70 years inspires any confidence that he possesses the qualities of any of our distinguished former Attorneys General and there is less reason for optimism that he will grow in office.

As a U.S. senator from Alabama, the state from which the infamous Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* originated, Sen. Sessions has failed to play a constructive role in repairing the damage to the Voting Rights Act caused by that decision. He was one of the leading opponents of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Sen. Sessions's record in support of efforts to bring needed reform to the nation's criminal justice system is virtually non-existent. And his Senate voting record and rhetoric has endeared him to white nationalist websites and organizations like Breitbart and Stormfront.

Sen. Sessions was the first federal prosecutor in the country to bring charges against civil rights activists for voter fraud and has called the landmark Voting Rights Act "a piece of intrusive legislation." He is one of the Senate's most hostile opponents of comprehensive immigration reform and was a principal architect of the draconian and incendiary immigration policy advocated by the current president during the 2016 campaign. When it comes to the effort to diversify the federal judiciary in his home state of Alabama and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, Sen. Sessions has at best been missing in action.

As Attorney General of the state of Alabama, Sen. Sessions fought to continue practices that harmed schools predominantly attended by African-American students, including leading the fight to uphold the state of Alabama's inequitable school funding mechanism after it had been deemed unconstitutional by the Alabama circuit court. Although Sen. Sessions has publicly taken credit for desegregation efforts in the state of Alabama, there is no evidence of his participation in the desegregation of Alabama schools or any school desegregation lawsuits filed by then-Attorney General Sessions.

Sen. Session's lengthy public record makes it difficult to place much faith in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. After staunchly opposing the Violence Against Women Act, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the expansion of anti-hate legislation to include sexual orientation, and fighting the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings, the long-time opponent of voluntary desegregation in Alabama now claims to be committed to the cause of equal opportunity for all Americans. The proponent of overruling *Roe v. Wade* now presents himself as a defender and protector of a woman's right to choose. The outspoken advocate of unfettered Second Amendment rights now says he can be trusted to enforce the nation's gun violence prevention laws.

Actions speak louder than words, and in the case of Sen. Sessions his 30-year record

of intense opposition on so many critical issues involving civil rights, women's rights, voting rights, criminal justice and immigration reform, and equal educational opportunity is the most compelling and powerful evidence that he should not be confirmed by the Senate to be the nation's 84th Attorney General.

RECOGNIZING THE POLISH LEGION MOTORCYCLE RIDING CLUB

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Polish Legion Motorcycle Riding Club. Since 2011 this organization has brought together members of our community of all ages who share a passion for riding motorcycles. I would like to give special recognition to the group's President, Szymon Moskal. Millions of citizens in the United States own and ride motorcycles, making ridership an American tradition. The Polish Legion Motorcycle Riding Club continues the proud tradition of motorcycle ridership and enthusiasm found in my district, and across our great nation. It is my privilege to assist them during their trip to our nation's capital.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for roll call vote 85 Tuesday, February 7, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on roll call vote 85.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF RULE SUB- MITTED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO AC- COUNTABILITY AND STATE PLANS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 7, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 57, the CRA Resolution for Disapproval of the Rule Submitted by the Department of Education Relating to Accountability and State Plans under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

I oppose this legislation because the regulation Republicans seek to rescind is intended to reduce educational opportunities in student achievement, quality of instruction, college readiness and other important outcomes.

ESEA, the national education law, represents a longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students.

ESEA authorizes state-run programs for eligible schools and districts eager to raise the